

Advice

Advice is available both from Teagasc and a number of Agricultural Consultants.

- In 2007 Teagasc appointed four specialist organic advisors who are regionally located.
- Combined with the Teagasc local advisory input, this will help to ensure that adequate support is available to their clients, both at the time of conversion and also on an ongoing basis.
- A demonstration farm programme is operated by Teagasc and the Department which enables visits to first-class facilities and see organic production and management techniques at first hand. Details of the open days will be published nationally well in advance.
- A number of Agricultural Consultants have been briefed by the Department and the Organic Certification Bodies in all aspects of the organic production system.

Education

Support is available to organic operators at many levels to facilitate compliance with the organic regulatory requirements and also enable them to reach their full potential within the system.

- Ø Education courses are available through The Organic Centre, Rossinver, Co. Leitrim, An t-Ionad Glas, Dromcollogher, Co. Limerick and the Wexford Organic Centre.
- Ø Short courses available through Teagasc and the Skillnets Programme.



Useful Contact Details

Organic Unit, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Johnstown Castle, Lo-call 1890 200 509.
Website: www.agriculture.gov.ie/organics

Teagasc

- Pat Barry, Moorepark, Fermoy, Co. Cork
Tel: 025-42222, 087-2138331
- Elaine Leavy, Grange, Co. Meath
Tel: 046-9061100, 087-9853285
- James McDonnell, Oak Park, Co. Carlow
Tel: 059-9170200, 087-3293820
- Dan Clavin, Athenry, Co. Galway
Tel: 091-845845, 087-9368506

Agricultural Consultants

Their contact details are available on the DAFF website or directly from the Organic Unit of the Department.

Ms. Helen Scully
Organic Trust Limited
Vernon House
2 Vernon Avenue
Clontarf
Dublin 3
Tel: 01-8530271.
www.organic-trust.org



Ms. Angela Clarke
IOFGA
Main Street
Newtonforbes
Co. Longford.
Tel: 043-42495.
www.irishorganic.ie



Education Centres

- The Organic Centre, Rossinver, Co. Leitrim
Tel: 071-9854338.
- An t-Ionad Glas Organic College, Dromcollogher, Co. Limerick
Tel: 063- 83604.
- Wexford Organic Centre, Cushenstown, Co. Wexford
Tel: 051-428375.



Organic Farming



One of the main aims of organic farming is the production of high quality food that the consumer is increasingly demanding.



Organic farming:

- ◆ Involves production systems with a high level of respect for the environment and welfare of animals. Concentrates on the nourishment of the soil through the use of natural inputs including farmyard manure and clover swards.
- ◆ Avoids the requirement for herbicides, fungicides and insecticides by using crop rotations.
- ◆ Maximises access to the outdoors using more appropriate types of animal, including traditional breeds. Provides liberal space and bedding material, when indoors, heightening the animal's natural immunity.
- ◆ Excludes the use of GMO's.

Organic Farming - a Real Opportunity for Beef Farmers

- ◆ Expanding market for organic products
- ◆ Increased supports for organic producers
- ◆ Price premium for organic livestock
- ◆ Export market potential in UK and the Continent
- ◆ No major changes required in converting to organic production

In keeping with the strong Government commitment to the development of the organic sector in Ireland, substantial financial supports are available to both producers and processors and these are outlined overleaf.

Organic Farming Scheme

It is now possible for organic farmers to obtain organic support payments *without* having to be in the REPS Scheme. Organic producers will still, or course, be able to join REPS as well.

The payment rates, which are additional to any REPS basic payments, are as follows:

Organic Farming Scheme payment rates per hectare per year		
	= 3ha and up to 55ha	> 55 ha
In conversion	€12/ha	€30/ha
Full organic status	€106/ha	€15/ha

Some examples of total payments for organic operators participating in both the Organic Farming Scheme and REPS 4		
Area	Max annual payment while in 2 year conversion period	Max annual payment when fully organic
20 ha	€8,920	€6,800
40 ha	€17,260	€13,020
55 ha	€21,670	€15,840



Schemes of Grant Aid for the Development of the Organic Sector

Development grants are available both to farmers and to processors under the Schemes of Grant Aid for the Development of the Organic Sector.

- Ø On-Farm grant aid for new equipment and facilities for production, preparation, grading, packing, storage, distribution and sale of organic products.
- Ø Grant aid of 40% for investments over €1,500
- Ø Maximum grant aid of €60,000 payable over the duration of the scheme, which runs from 2007-2013.



Off-Farm grant aid is also available.

Regulation

Organic production and labelling of organic products is controlled by European and national regulation, i.e. Council Regulation 2092/91, which is backed up by Statutory Instruments 112 of 2004 and 698 of 2007. The EU legislation allows Member States to use private inspection bodies to carry out the inspection and licensing system of organic operators. Two certification bodies carry out this work in Ireland, i.e. Irish Organic Farmers & Growers Association (IOFGA) and Organic Trust Ltd.

To become an organic operator an applicant must first make contact with one of these two bodies who will initiate the licensing process.

Marketing

The development of the organic sector in Ireland has to be market driven. Bord Bia, in consultation with the Organic Market Development Group, has produced a three-year Organic Marketing Plan 2006-2009. The objective of the €1.5m Plan is to develop the organic sector in Ireland for existing suppliers and new entrants, and assist them to develop their market potential. One important element of the plan is research into the export potential for organic operators in key European markets.